



Ambassador Jeffrey L. Bleich – Emancipation Proclamation and TIP Hero Event

**Remarks of Ambassador Bleich
at the Emancipation Proclamation and TIP Hero Event,
Canberra**

(As prepared for delivery – September 20, 2012)

Thank you Kim for that warm and generous introduction, and thank you to ANU for hosting this very special event marking two historic moments – the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, and honoring Dr. Anne Gallagher – the first Australian ever to be recognized with the United States State Department Heroes Award for her decades’ long effort to end human trafficking.

This is a time to remember a pivotal day, not only for the United States, but for civilization: A day when millions of human beings were delivered from slavery. It was also a day when a good nation became great, by denouncing once and for all the evil institution of slavery.

Slavery was the unresolved contradiction of the United States. At the time of its founding, the United States was blessed with some of the greatest minds and courageous individuals of their generation. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams. They imagined a new nation: One in which leaders did not derive power from the accident of birth, or by taking power from others by force. Rather they imagined a society in which the people chose their leaders, and those leaders served the people. It was an audacious idea -- based, as Thomas Jefferson wrote, on the belief that “all men are created equal. That they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights. That among those rights are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

The words seem familiar today. But in 1776, this was a revolutionary concept. Nowhere else on earth, was there a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. In fact, this idea was so revolutionary that no one – including its founders -- knew if it would really work.

Indeed, as Ben Franklin left Constitution Hall in Philadelphia, having just reached agreement on a constitution, a woman in the crowd outside called out to him. She said: “Dr. Franklin. What have we got? A Republic or a Monarchy?” And Franklin replied “A Republic, madame. If you can keep it.”

If you can keep it.



Ambassador Jeffrey L. Bleich – Emancipation Proclamation and TIP Hero Event

The question was, could Americans keep this marvelous new type of nation together. The founders were determined to preserve the unity of the states, and their independence from England at all costs.

The founders were visionaries for their time, but they were still men of their times, with the blind-spots and prejudices that afflict us all. Some were simply pragmatists. They were not prepared to let the perfect be the enemy of the good – they knew that certain states would never join a union that banned slavery. Other founders, though heroic in some ways, were flawed in others. They accepted slavery as a time honored tradition -- dating back to the Code of Hammurabi. And so, for varying reasons, they subordinated the controversial issue of slavery to the larger goal of preserve the union and its independence.

This was the contradiction of the constitution. A nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men were created equal; did not in fact extend equality to all men. It did not extend equality to black men and women.

Some of the founders, men like Thomas Jefferson, understood this terrible contradiction. But the idea of challenging slavery then – even for Jefferson – was simply more than the fragile republic could bear. But Jefferson – a slave-owner himself – also recognized that one day there were be a great reckoning. In fact, he said “I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just: that his justice cannot sleep forever.”

Jefferson was right, that God’s justice could not sleep forever. The institution of slavery ultimately divided the United States to the point where slave-holding and non-slave-holding states went to war with one another, turning neighbors against neighbors and brothers against brothers. It remains today the bloodiest and most costly war in U.S. history, taking more American lives than all other wars combined.

The President, Abraham Lincoln, at first sought only to hold the Union together. But as the war raged on, he recognized that the inhumanity of slavery had been a cancer that produced this capacity for cruelty and slaughter; and that true peace could not be achieved as long as slavery existed. Ultimately, injustice to any man was injustice to every man. It had to end.

In the weeks leading up to his proclamation, Lincoln recognized that the United States could not continue as a nation built on freedom in which men lived with no freedom. That a house divided between free men and slaves could not stand. And so 150 years ago, he issued a proclamation – the Emancipation Proclamation.

On September 22, 1862, Lincoln ordered that the 3.1 million slaves in the rebel states be freed. In doing so, he made clear that the war’s mission was no longer merely to reunite



Ambassador Jeffrey L. Bleich – Emancipation Proclamation and TIP Hero Event

the states, but to unite them as a truly free nation. It was a new birth of freedom. The abolition of slavery transformed the United States from a house divided by internal moral contradictions, to a nation that could at last live up to its promise of a nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Reflecting on the many lives lost, the great human suffering that slavery had created, Lincoln stood at Gettysburg and expressed a new hope for all mankind. From this tragedy, he called upon us, one and all to dedicate ourselves to this great pursuit. That we renew our faith in the proposition that all men are created equal, and that we work to ensure that government of the people, by the people, and for the people would not perish from this earth.

In the years that followed, the nations of the world individually and then together came to outlaw slavery anywhere in all of its forms. In 1926, the first Convention to abolish slavery was signed, and today slavery is outlawed in every nation on earth.

And yet the work is not done. We know that some forms of enslavement continue to exist. People may be enslaved by trickery. Traffickers make false promises of a job, or migration, or a marriage. They prey on people's hopes and aspirations. Or they simply abduct people, frighten them, use physical force, drug them, or use debt bondage to take them to distant places and abuse them for sex or labor. Today, as many as a million people are trafficked across borders each year.

And that is part of the reason we gather here today. We come to fulfill the promise that began with the Emancipation Proclamation – of freedom for all humankind. And we come to honor the courage and commitment of heroes, people who devote their lives to stopping human traffickers.

It is fitting that we acknowledge our past at the same time that commit ourselves to the cause of combating all human trafficking. We do this work not because we believe we are better than others; it is because we know we have at times been worse. It is born of our acknowledgment of past mistakes and the dark parts of our history -- we do not hide them, and we do not hide *from* them; we remember them, we work hard to rectify them, and we honor the efforts and sacrifices made to bring justice and freedom.

And so today, before I recognize our 2012 Hero, we remember Lincoln's words. We are blessed today to have Kamahl – one of Australia's greatest voices and greatest hearts, the recipient of the Order of Australia, the Centenary Medal, and Australian Father of the Year – here with us. Thank you Kamahl for joining us today, to deliver the Gettysburg Address in honor of this occasion.

Kamahl will now deliver the Gettysburg address



Ambassador Jeffrey L. Bleich – Emancipation Proclamation and TIP Hero Event

Introduction of Anne Gallagher

We know that despite our great progress in the global effort towards freedom, our work is not done. As we celebrate a landmark event in the struggle for human freedom, we also rededicate ourselves to this unfinished work. Abraham Lincoln's legacy lives on in those who today continue the fight to ensure that no person's body is owned or exploited. We celebrate one of those people today.

It is a distinct honor to introduce a genuine living hero in great quest to eradicate slavery in all of its forms. Dr. Anne Gallagher. Dr. Gallagher is a lawyer, practitioner, teacher, scholar, and activist, global expert on international human trafficking law, and a leader in the modern-day fight to end human slavery and trafficking in persons.

Those who traffic in human beings are by definition brutal and dangerous people. It requires courage and commitment to challenge them. Each year, the U.S. State Department recognizes a few select heroes, who have put their own safety at risk to stop human traffickers. For the first time ever, this year, one of the awardees was an Australian – our friend, Dr. Gallagher.

As Secretary Clinton noted in recognizing Anne's achievements, her commitment to ending human slavery extends over 20 years. While at the U.N., Anne played an important role in developing the protocols on human trafficking and migrant smuggling. She served as the founding Chair of the UN Inter-Agency Group on these issues. And she led the development of the United Nations Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking.

Here in Australia, for nearly a decade, Anne has led AusAID's Asia Regional Trafficking in Persons Project. This project is the world's largest and most ambitious criminal justice initiative against trafficking. Its impact is felt both within and outside the ASEAN region.

Anne's influential publications are too numerous to cite. They include the sole legal reference text on the law of international human trafficking, several articles, and countless handbooks, reports, and training materials on human rights, criminal justice, and the rule of law.

In November 2011 Anne was awarded the inaugural Australian Freedom Award for her international work against contemporary forms of slavery. In June 2012 she was



Ambassador Jeffrey L. Bleich – Emancipation Proclamation and TIP Hero Event

appointed Officer of the Order of Australia. This appointment was made for her: "distinguished service to the law and human rights, as a practitioner, teacher and scholar, particularly in areas of human trafficking responses and criminal justice."

Because of Anne, the promise of freedom is more than words on a page. It is a living breathing reality. And so today, as we prepare for the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, we thank her for giving renewed life and hope to the noblest of all human enterprises – to liberate all humankind. Please join me in extending a warm welcome to Dr. Anne Gallagher.